

# **COLLECTIONS OVERVIEW**

## **MICROFORMAT COLLECTIONS**

### **I. SCOPE**

This overview focuses on the general microform collection in the Humanities and Social Sciences Division (HSS). The collection in a microformat includes any item--single titles and collections--which would normally be part of the classed collections. The HSS general microform collection consists of original micropublications and microfilmed materials primarily in the fields of the arts and humanities and the social sciences. It includes: books; serials; pamphlets; dissertations; manuscripts; personal and organizational papers; government and international organizations documents; memos and correspondence; transcripts of radio broadcasts; oral histories; college, trade, auction and exhibition catalogs; and playbills. There is almost no subject for which the Library does not have some microform available. The collection also includes the hundreds of guides, indexes and other paper reference materials essential to effectively use this vast collection. The Library's main text/fiche collection (a hybrid book-microfiche publication) is also part of the collection.

### **II. SIZE**

The total estimated number of individual pieces of microform is approximately: 8,082,000 pieces.

Most of the microform collection is made up of discrete collections. A rough estimate of the number of collections is 1,100 and growing. The size of each collection varies greatly. A collection can have 20 individual titles, or 200, or 100,000 or more. For example, the Microform Reading Room receives more than 50,000-60,000 dissertations per year.

### **III. GENERAL RESEARCH STRENGTHS**

Because this collection is a "format" collection, the research strengths of the HSS microform collection are spread over a wide range of disciplines. Within this universality there are numerous areas of specific research strength. The most notable (and largest) single collection is the collection of American doctoral dissertations microfilmed by University Microfilms International. No other research institution has a full set. Individual microform collections make up the bulk of the collection and are often mini-libraries in themselves. These microform collections greatly enhance the research strength in numerous areas, or subjects including: British and American studies; early imprints from Great Britain; Latin America, Russia and Western Europe. Subjects also included within this vast collection are: periodicals; history of

economics; African-American history; biblical, patristic and medieval European manuscripts and manuscript books; dramatic works; women's studies; history of religion; works of fiction including dime and early science fiction novels; documents of government and international organizations; pamphlets and other ephemera; labor and labor history; oral history transcripts; education, and much more.

#### **IV. AREAS OF DISTINCTION**

A selected list of notable microfilm collections includes:

American Periodical Series  
US City Directories (1861-1960)  
POW-MIA Vietnam Collections  
Early state records  
British manuscripts project  
Western Americana, 1550-1900  
Archive de Hidalgo del Parral, 1631-1821  
Joint Publications Research Services reports  
Dutch underground press, 1940-1945  
Library of Congress: a documentary history  
Mother Bethel AME Church.  
Historical Museum holdings Early American orderly books, 1748-1817  
Irish genealogy  
MLA reproductions of manuscripts and rare printed books  
Goldsmiths'-Kress library of economic literature  
American culture series  
Spanish drama of the golden age  
Archives of the Japanese ministry of foreign affairs, 1868-1945  
Confidential U.S. State Department central file (many countries)  
Temperance and prohibition papers  
History of women  
Schomburg Center clipping file, 1925-1974  
Portuguese pamphlets, 1610-1921  
Russian imperial government publications  
History of photography  
Archives of the Fabian Society  
Cuban Exile Collections Press Conferences: Secretaries of State

#### **V. ELECTRONIC RESOURCES**

There is a Web-based guide that contains a listing of many collections received from 1996 through the present. *Guide to the Microform Collections in the Humanities and Social Sciences Division*, accessible at <http://www.loc.gov/rr/microform/guide/>, is routinely updated to reflect current holdings. Other electronic indexes and guides to the microformat collections include:

indexes to ERIC and CIS; guides to full text publications such as 18<sup>th</sup> Century Collections Online, Sabin Americana Series 1500-1926; ProQuest Digital Dissertations; and the American Periodicals Series.

## **VI. WEAKNESSES/EXCLUSIONS**

Because this collection is a "format" collection, covering a wide range of disciplines, the material cannot be discussed in terms of "subject". The microfilm collection is not intended as a stand-alone collection, but rather this collection complements or supplements the book and non-book collections of the Library. Hence, Recommending Officers throughout the Library are relied on to determine important to purchases for the Microform Reading Room. The primary factors affecting the growth of the collection are availability of funds and the issue of copyright deposit of microfilm collections. The main weakness is not in what is or is not in the collection, but the quality of access. Space constraints prevent a logical arrangement of materials and some collections remain in their packing boxes. Online bibliographic access is lacking for specific titles in some of the large collections and there is a card catalog to older materials for which online records do not exist.